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SPORTS

Winchester High football coaches, captains catch Patriots fever with their Super Bowl picks

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

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Winchester High School football coaches and players are excited for the Super Bowl. They gave their predictions for the Sunday, Feb. 8 game. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL

The long wait is over for New England Patriot fans. They had to e
"long" six years without their team in the Super Bowl, but now un

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management the Pats are back.

With new head coach Mike Vrabel and second year quarterback Drake Maye, Bob Kraft's team is getting ready for Super Bowl LX at Levi Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif. this Sunday, Feb. 8. NBC will broadcast the game, which will be seen locally on Channel 10 at 6:30 p.m.

Bill Belichick and Tom Brady, the architects of the last dynasty from 2001 to 2019, are long gone, and have since been replaced by Vrabel and Maye. Vrabel has three Super Bowl rings from that Belichick era as its middle linebacker and part time tight end, but it's his time now to craft the next generation top tier NFL organization that's second to none in the eyes of opponents and fans alike. With Maye as his signal caller, he's well on his way to create his own legacy.

The excitement emanating from Gillette Stadium is reverberating once again throughout New England and beyond.

Winchester High football head coach Wally Dembowski and his assistants, along with three of his captains have also caught Patriots Fever, and couldn't wait to give their predictions and thoughts on Sunday's game for the Winchester News.

Patriots 20 – Seahawks 17

"The Patriots will win in a tough defensive battle, if they can neutralize Seattle superstar wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba, minimize their tight end play and put a little pressure on quarterback Sam Darnold. They haven't faced the best offenses in the playoffs, even though everyone keeps on talking about the defenses that they had faced. The Chargers and Texans offenses are not fantastic, and Denver was missing its starting quarterback, so the Patriots defense needs to execute to win this [Subscribe] while also creating a couple of takeaways. The offense will hopefully

execute enough to keep the ball away from Seattle. (New England's) special teams could end up deciding the game."

Wally Dembowski, Winchester football head coach

Patriots 20 – Seahawks 13

"This is purely a hopeful and emotional pick, because Seattle's defense worries me."

Wayne Pandolph, Winchester football offensive coordinator

Winchester High football captain Bryan Harrison. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Patriots 28 – Seahawks 21

"I think our defense is wicked strong, and (Patriots head) coach Mike Vrabel (and offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels) will cook up a good

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offensive gameplan (to beat the Seahawks)."

Bryan Harrison, Winchester football captain

Patriots 24 – Seahawks 13

"Starting with the Seahawks offense, while they have been nothing short of efficient and dominant, I think there are some caveats to be taken into consideration. Over their last 10 games, they have faced one team – the Minnesota Vikings – that was ranked in the Top 15 on defense (third). In other words, on football's biggest stage, it'll be the first time in 12 weeks that they will face a Top 10 defense, with the Patriots defense ending the regular season ranked eighth overall. I think if the Pats are able to make (quarterback Sam) Darnold uncomfortable early, while also eliminating Seattle wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba's effectiveness, their offense will struggle. Seattle's running game is included in this (assessment) with the injury to Zach Charbonnet. The majority of handoffs will be going to Kenneth Walker. We will see how he matches up against the Patriots No. 6-ranked run defense.

"Moving on to the Seahawks defense, over the past 10 games they have played the likes of (Los Angeles Rams quarterback Matt) Stafford three times, and he was able to put up 1,309 yards in total offense against the 'second coming' of the 'Legion of Boom'; (not to mention San Francisco quarterback) Brock Purdy twice; (Carolina Panthers quarterback) Bryce Young; (Colts quarterback) Philip Rivers, who was a high school coach, before returning to the NFL to fill-in for the team's injured quarterbacks; (Atlanta Falcons quarterback) Kirk Cousins, who made only his fourth start this season in Week 14 against them; (Minnesota Vikings quarterback) Max Brosmer; and (Tennessee) rookie (quarterback) Cam Ward. Enough said with the last two.

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“(Patriots quarterback) Drake Maye hasn't played his best ball throughout the playoffs, but he has a coaching staff behind him that I think will put the cherry on top of his season with a Super Bowl victory. (Head coach Mike) Vrabel, who is a three-time Super Bowl champion (as a player under his predecessor Bill Belichick), knows how to win these games. I think his biggest job will be to manage their emotions. As for (offensive coordinator) Josh McDaniels, this will be his 10th Super Bowl appearance. If you don't think he's dialed-in for this game, you are out of your mind.

“When you get to a game like this where the whole world is watching, coaching experience matters, and the Patriots have it, while you can't say that for the other side.”

William O’Connor, Winchester football running back coach

Winchester High football captain Lucas Sekino. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Patriots 27 – Seahawks 24

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“I think the Patriots are going to win, because of our elite defense. Players like (defensive lineman) Milton Williams and (cornerback) Christian Gonzalez are going to lead us on that side of the ball, while (quarterback) Drake Maye will sling the rock on offense.”

Lucas Sekino, Winchester football captain

Patriots 24 – Seahawks 10

“The Patriots interior defensive line causes all sorts of problems, and (hopefully) that forces Sam Darnold to see those friendly ghosts of his past, once again. On the other side of the ball, if the Patriots offensive line gets in a groove early on that should (pave the way) for running back Rhamondre Stevenson to have a monster game, and (quite possibly) win the MVP.”

Nick Fazio, Winchester football offensive line coach

Patriots in a blowout

“I believe we have the better quarterback (Drake Maye) of the two teams, even though our last few games have been extremely tough on offense. We also have the better running backs of the two teams. Our wide receivers, I believe, are better, just based on who we have played compared to who they have played all season long. Both defenses are about the same in speed and physicality, but quarterback Sam Darnold has not seen a defense this fast this year. He isn’t going to be able to get loose like he usually does, and as a result will make mistakes, because the pressure will be too much for him. (Taking that into account), the Patriots defense should also put points on the board.”

Kevin Maurice, Winchester football JV head coach

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Patriots 34 – Seahawks 24

“I believe that the Patriots will win by playing an all-around team game. They have a different energy under (head coach Mike) Vrabel’s leadership that will enable them to step up and win it in the fourth quarter. The offense will move the ball with ease, while the defense and special teams will (make) big plays to change the momentum at key points of the game.”

Davis Clarke, Winchester football JV coach

Winchester High football captain Gianni DePrimeo. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Patriots 30 – Seahawks 26

“I think the Pats are going to win, because (quarterback) Drake Maye is (already) the G.O.A.T., and (head) coach (Mike) Vrabel is the best in the league.”

Gianni DePrimeo, Winchester football captain

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Joe McConnell is a longtime, award-winning sports editor for numerous North Shore publications. He began covering Winchester sports for the News in November 2024 and is currently its Sports Editor. He can be reached at editor@winchesternews.org.

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Winchester boys basketball heads to Bridgewater-Raynham for Sweet 16 game after beating Lexington in postseason opener

It was the third meeting this year between Middlesex League boys basketball rivals Lexington (16-5, 11th seed) and Winchester (17-4, 22nd seed). They split the first two during the regular season, thus making this Round of 32 postseason matchup the

SPORTS

Winchester wrestling enjoys Top 10 finish at state divisional meet; senior captains move on to All-States

After the Winchester High qualified wrestlers competed hard over two days last weekend (Feb. 20, 21) in the State Division 1 Meet at North Andover Hig r Nature gave them a break t

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impromptu rubber game of this year's series, with the

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March 3, 2026

recuperate with Monday's blizzard that resulted in two days off from school. There

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SPORTS

Winchester boys hockey advances to the Sweet 16 after beating Wachusett in the tournament opener

The Winchester High boys hockey team (12-9-2), the 17th seed, edged the 16th-seeded Wachusett Regional Mountaineers (18-2-1), 5-4 in a Round of 32 Division 1 state tournament game at Westborough's Northstar Ice Arena on Feb. 25. The Red & Black will now take on top seed Catholic Memorial (18-2-1)

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR
February 27, 2026

SPORTS

With postseason starting Friday night, WHS boys hoop seniors English, Sarpong, Burbine join Middlesex League elite

The Winchester High boys basketball team, the 22nd seed, will take on Middlesex League rival Lexington, the 11th seed, to begin the Division 1 state tournament in the Round of 32 on Friday night, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. These teams are so evenly matched, beginning with the

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February 26, 2026

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and

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his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

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